

Application Serial No.: 09/886,213
Amendment dated March 8, 2004
Reply to Office Action dated November 6, 2003

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application as presently amended and in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 2-4, 6-8, and 25-36 are pending in this case, Claims 2 and 25-27 having been amended and Claims 28-36 having been added by way of the present Amendment.

In the present Amendment, the rejections based upon the You et al. reference (U.S. Patent No. 6,066,574) have been addressed by antedating that reference, as will be discussed further below. Furthermore, the Applicants have removed from Claims 1 and 27-29 the subject matter from previously pending Claim 5, which was incorporated into Claims 1 and 27-29 in the Amendment filed on September 26, 2003. The subject matter of Claim 5 has been incorporated into new Claim 28.

Claims 2-4, 6-8, and 25-27 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by You et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,066,574). For the reasons discussed below, the Applicants request the withdrawal of the anticipation rejection.

The present application claims foreign priority to JP 10-092494 that was filed on March 20, 1998 and JP 10-322884 that was filed on October 28, 1998. Certified English translations of JP 10-092494 and JP 10-322884 are being submitted concurrently herewith in order to perfect priority of the present application. Since the You et al. reference was filed on November 6, 1998, then the foreign priority documents of the present application antedate the You et al. reference. Accordingly, the Applicants respectfully submit that the You et al. reference has been removed as a prior art reference.

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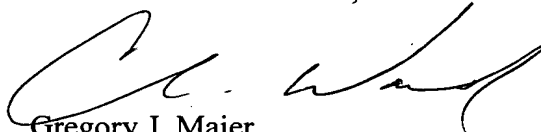
Accordingly, the Applicants respectfully request the withdrawal of the anticipation rejection of Claims 2-4, 6-8, and 25-27. Claim 28 is allowable for at least the reasons indicated for Claim 2, from which it depends.

Newly added Claims 29-26 are considered allowable as they recite features of the invention that are neither disclosed nor suggested by all the references of record. Support for these new claims can be found in the specification, for example, on page 11, lines 3-34.

Consequently, in view of the above discussion, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in condition for formal allowance and an early and favorable reconsideration of this application is therefore requested.

Respectfully Submitted,

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